

Remarks

The Office Action mailed February 7, 2005, has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application, of which claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, and 13 have been amended. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims recite allowable subject matter.

The undersigned wishes to thank Examiner Hyeon for the courtesies extended in a telephonic interview on March 31, 2005 wherein the objections to the drawings were discussed. The Examiner offered suggestions for changes to the cross hatching in the drawings that are incorporated in the accompanying drawing changes.

The objections to the drawings are respectfully traversed. Submitted herewith are replacement drawing sheets incorporating changes to Figures 1, 2 4, 5, and 6 as indicated above. In Figure 1, the reference numeral 160, which was not referenced in the description, is corrected to 150. In Figures 2, 4, 5, and 6, the cross hatching is changed for clarity, adopting the Examiner's suggestions. No new matter has been added.

Applicant notes that, with respect to Figures 2, 5, and 6, the gel material (150) has sufficient structural integrity, that the gel material does not flow into the chambers (138) as discussed in paragraph 0016 in the description. Similarly, the gel material does not flow into the beveled areas (172). These areas therefore are not changed in the drawings.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

The objection to the disclosure is respectfully traversed. Paragraph 0017 of the disclosure has been amended adopting the Examiner's suggestions. Specifically, at line 5,

“upper ends 131” has been amended to --front ends 131--. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Okayasu et al. (U.S. Patent 6,364,692) is respectfully traversed.

Okayasu et al. describe a connector including a female housing (10) and a male housing (20). A seal (30) is located on the front surface of the female housing and is held in place by a seal holder (40). The male housing includes a main body (21) and a receptacle (22) extending from the mating surface of the main body. A plurality of L-shaped contact tabs (23) extend into the receptacle. The female housing includes an accommodating portion (11) that has a plurality of contact cavities (13). A receptacle cover (12) surrounds the accommodating portion. A rubber ring (19) extends over a circumference of the accommodating portion to provide sealing between the male and female housings. The seal holder holds the seal against the front end of the accommodating portion. The contact tabs penetrate the seal when the male and female housings are joined. The seal consists of a gelatinous or elastic material.

Claim 1 recites a connector, including “a housing having a mating face configured to join a mating connector, said housing comprising an outer shell and an inner shell disposed within said outer shell; wherein said inner shell includes a contact receiving end and a wire receiving end, and a shoulder on an outer perimeter thereof, said inner shell further including a channel on an outer perimeter thereof between said shoulder and said wire receiving end, said channel receiving a seal; a contact held in said housing proximate said mating face; and a gel material provided on said housing between said contact and said mating face, said gel material including a self-sealing slit formed in said gel material, said slit being configured to accept the mating connector and, when the mating connector is removed, said slit closing to seal said contact”.

It is respectfully submitted that Okayasu et al. neither describe nor suggest the apparatus recited in claim 1. Specifically, Okayasu et al. neither describe nor suggest a connector including an inner shell having a shoulder on an outer perimeter thereof, and including a channel

on an outer perimeter thereof between the shoulder and the wire receiving end, the channel receiving a seal. Rather, Okayasu et al. describe a seal over an accommodating portion that abuts the base of a receptacle cover. No seal channel is formed in the accommodating portion.

Accordingly, claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Okayasu et al.

Claims 2-9 depend from independent claim 1. When the recitations of claims 2-9 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 1, Applicant submits that dependent claims 2-9 likewise are patentable over Okayasu et al.

Claim 10 recites connector assembly including “a plug holding a plug contact; and a receptacle including a mating end and a wire receiving end, said receptacle holding a receptacle contact, said receptacle having a gel material provided on said receptacle over a face of said receptacle, said plug contact piercing said gel material when said plug and receptacle are joined, said gel material re-sealing when said plug contact is removed; wherein said receptacle includes a shoulder between said mating end and said wire receiving end, said receptacle further including a channel thereon between said shoulder and said wire receiving end, said channel receiving a seal”.

It is respectfully submitted that Okayasu et al. neither describe nor suggest the apparatus recited in claim 10. Specifically, Okayasu et al. neither describe nor suggest a receptacle that includes a shoulder between a mating end and a wire receiving end, and a channel thereon between the shoulder and the wire receiving end, the channel receiving a seal. Rather, Okayasu et al. describe a seal over an accommodating portion that abuts the base of a receptacle cover. No seal channel is formed in the accommodating portion.

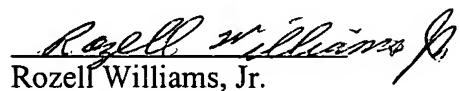
Accordingly, claim 10 is submitted to be patentable over Okayasu et al.

Claims 11-19 depend from independent claim 10. When the recitations of claims 11-19 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 10, Applicant submits that dependent claims 11-19 likewise are patentable over Okayasu et al.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1-19 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,


Rozell Williams, Jr.
Registration No. 44,403
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740
(314) 621-5070

IN THE DRAWINGS:

The attached replacement sheets of drawings includes changes to Figures 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. Replacement sheet 1 replaces original sheet 1 including changes to Figures 1 and 2. In Figure 1, reference numeral 160 is corrected to 150. In Figure 2, the cross hatching is expanded for clarity. In addition, the cross hatching for seal members 134, and 146 is changed for clarity as suggested by the Examiner.

Replacement sheet 2 replaces original sheet 2 including changes to Figure 4. In Figure 4, the cross hatching is expanded for clarity. In addition, the cross hatching for seal members 260, is changed for clarity as suggested by the Examiner.

Replacement sheet 3 replaces original sheet 3 including changes to Figure 5. In Figure 5, the cross hatching is expanded for clarity. In addition, the cross hatching for seal members 134, 146, and 260 is changed for clarity as suggested by the Examiner.

Replacement sheet 4 replaces original sheet 4 including changes to Figure 6. In Figure 6, the cross hatching is expanded for clarity. In addition, the cross hatching for seal members 134, 146, and 260 is changed for clarity as suggested by the Examiner.

The amendments to the drawings add no new matter.

Attachments: 4 Replacement Sheets, 4 redline markups.

INVENTOR: David William Solano

S/N: 10/789,856 DOCKET: 18005 (AT: 20958-38)

ATTORNEY: Dean Small PHONE: (314) 621-5070

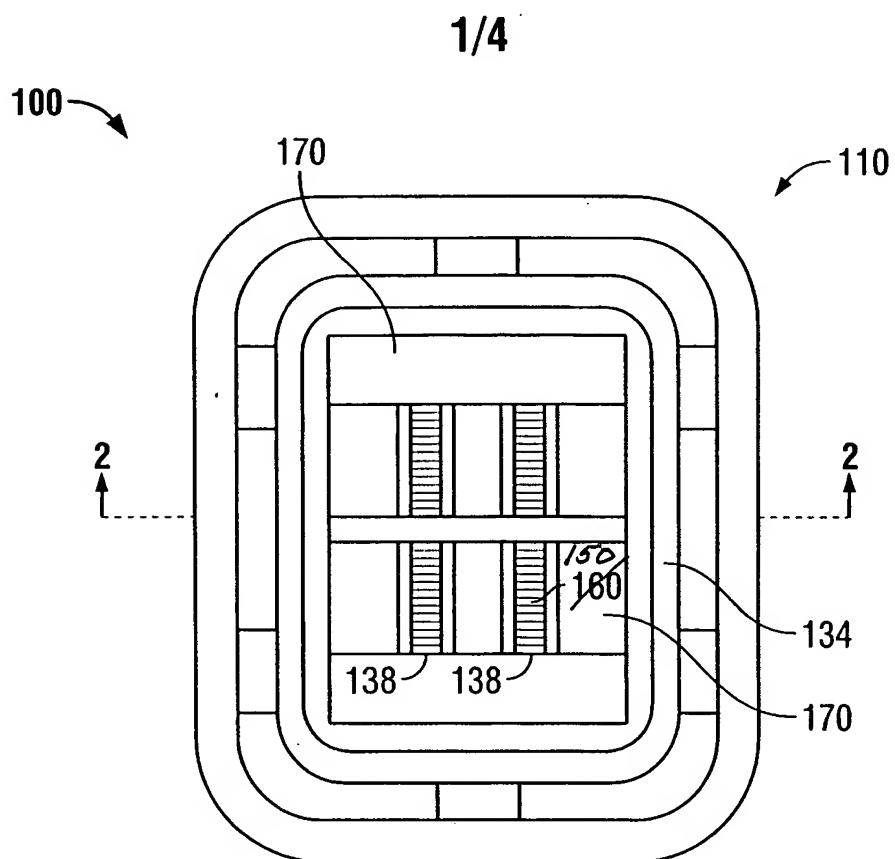


FIG. 1

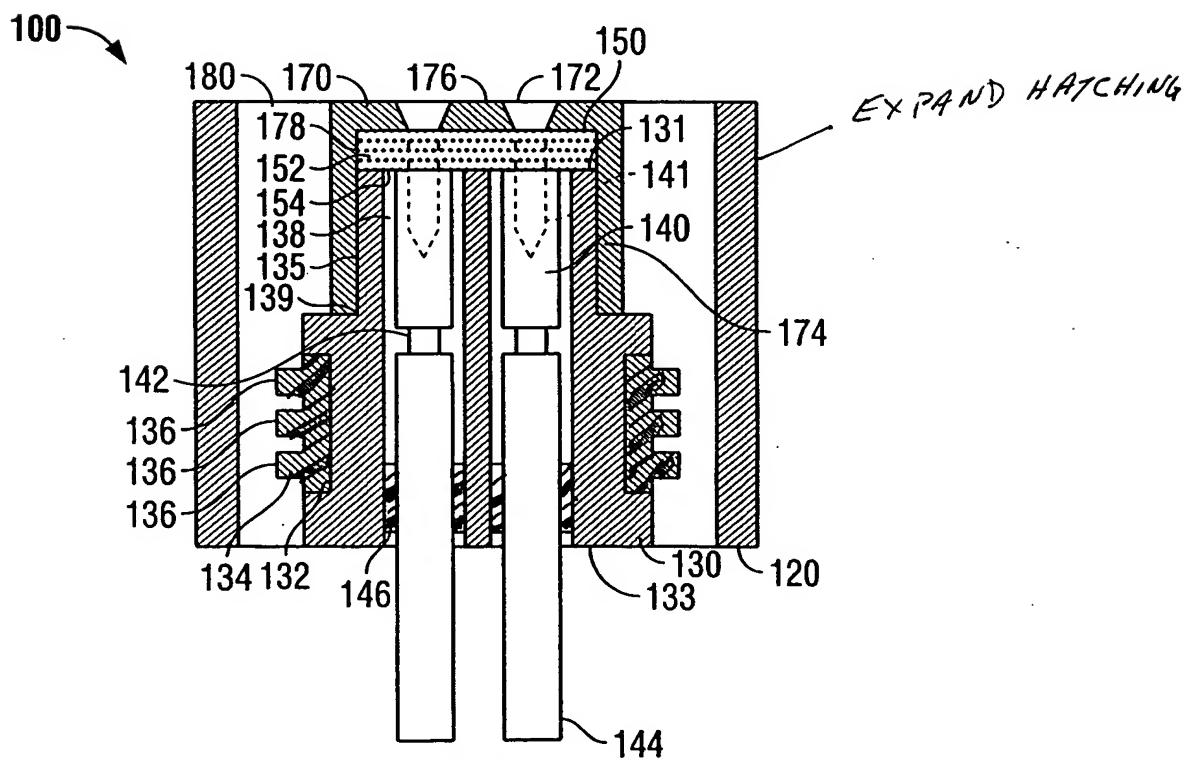


FIG. 2

2/4

200

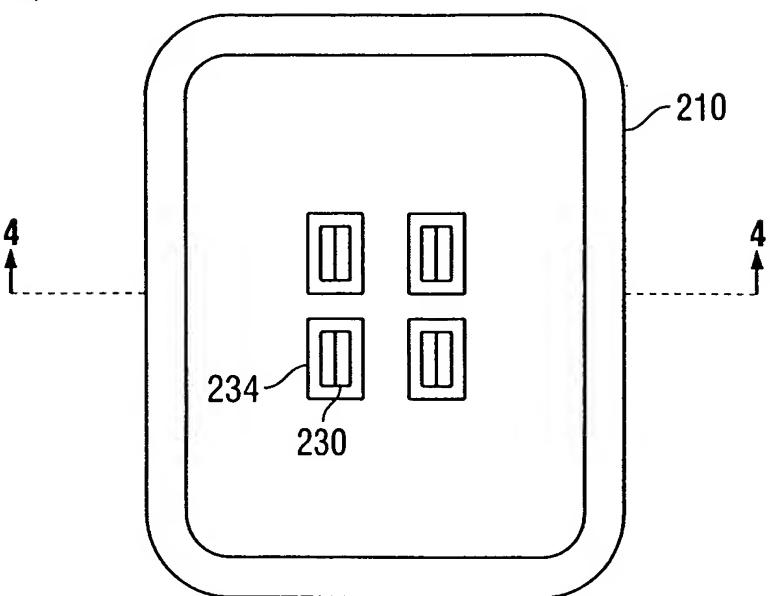


FIG. 3

200

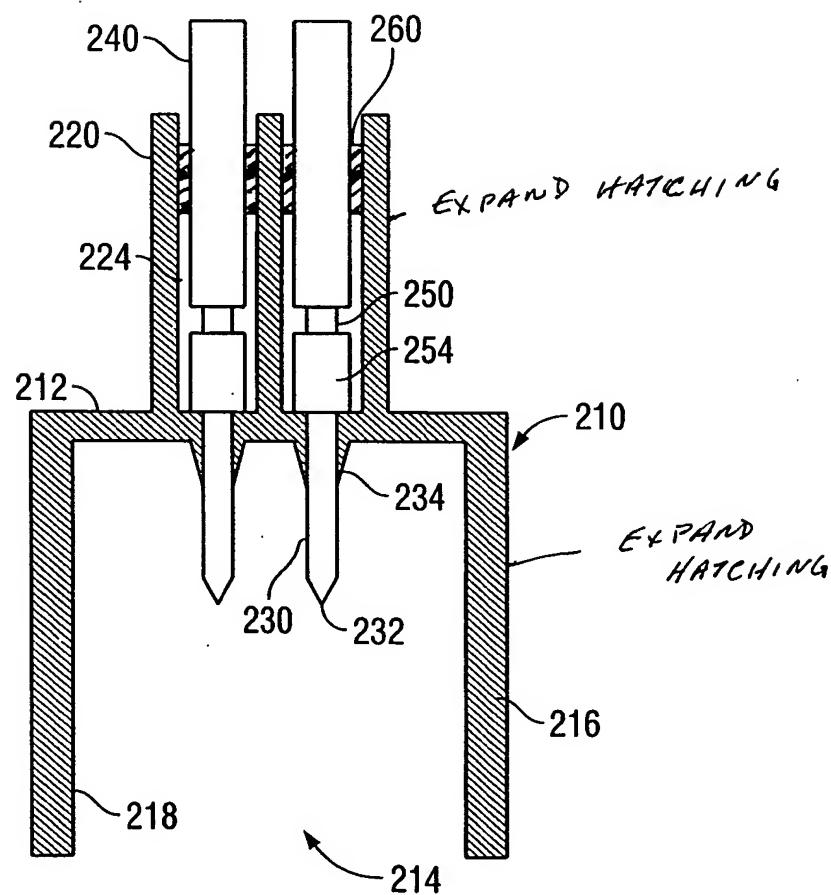


FIG. 4

3/4

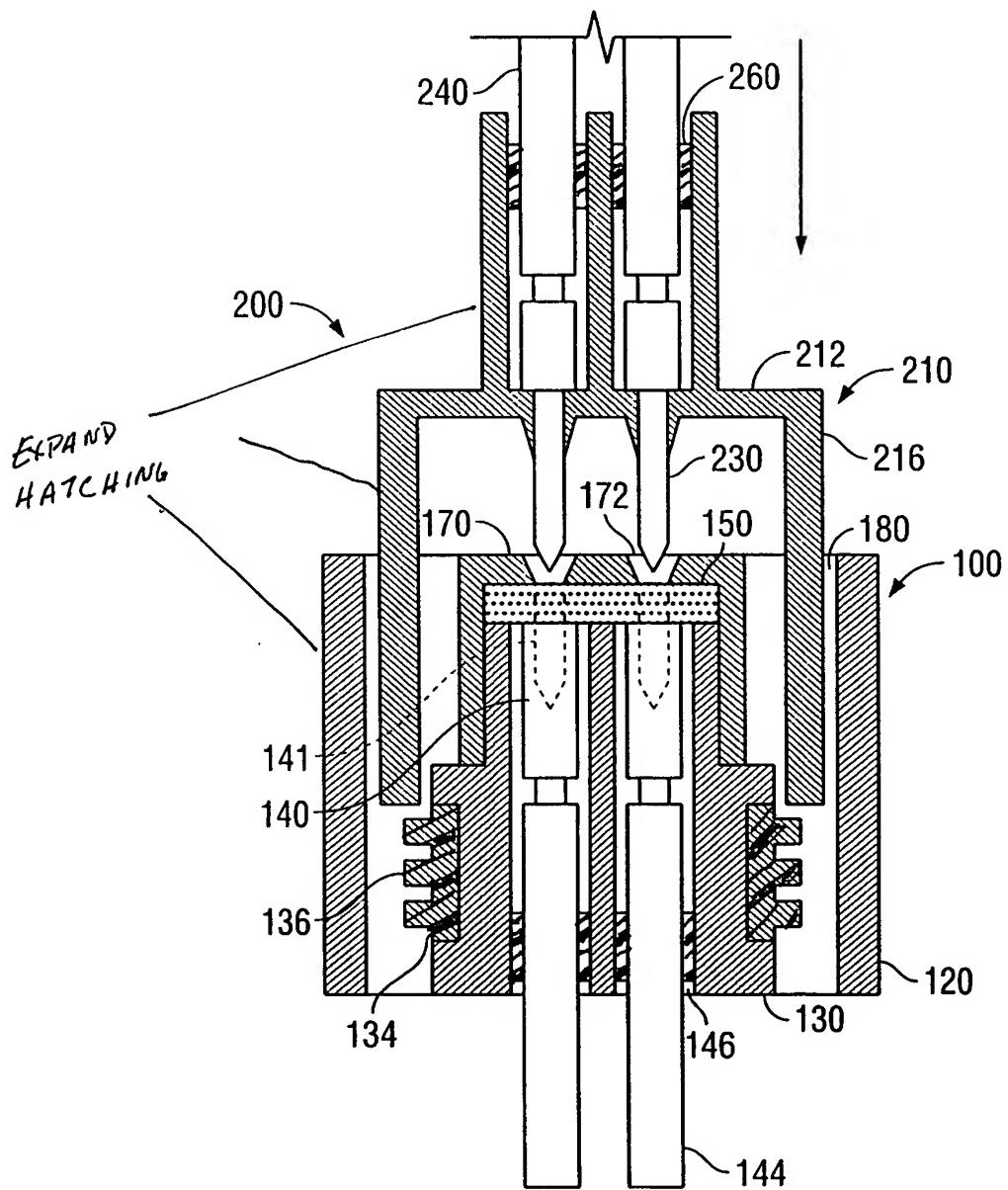


FIG. 5

4/4

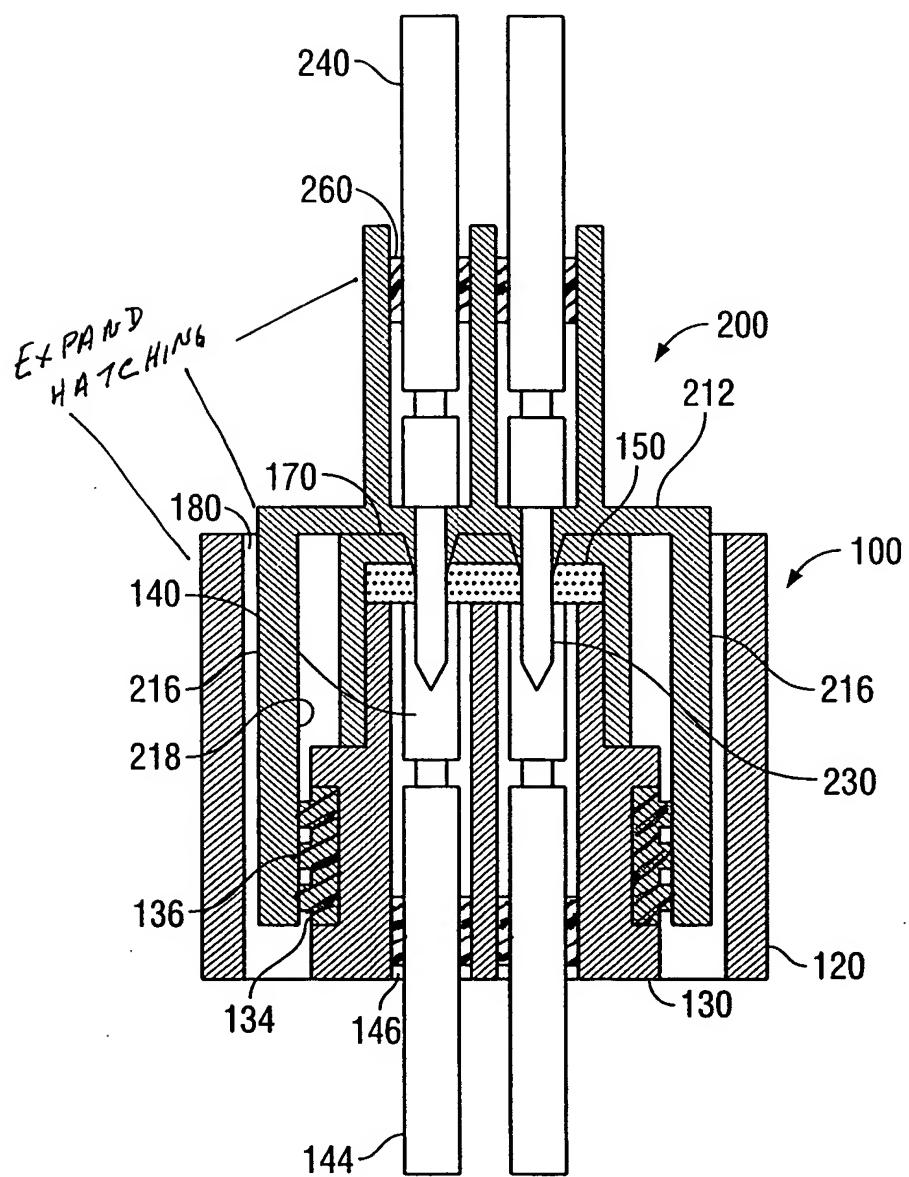


FIG. 6